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THE GARDENER BOY. Page 23.

THE

WAY TO BE HAPPY;

OR,

WILLIE, THE GARDENER BOY.

BY

CATHERINE D. BELL.

RICHMOND:
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

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THE WAY TO BE HAPPY.

CHAPTER I.

DR. COLVILLE'S TALK WITH WILLIE.

"Oh, papa, I have been wishing so much that you would come!" cried Charlie Colville, as his father entered the breakfast-room one morning. "I want you to look at that little boy at the gate, and tell me if you know him."

Dr. Colville went to the window where Charles was.

"Oh," cried Charles, disappointed, "how provoking! There he is running away across the field, over the road, just when you have come. He has been waiting here for ever so long, walking up and down in front of the gate, and stopping every now and then

to look in. I wonder who he can be, or what he wants."

"Perhaps he may be ill, or have been sent by a sick person to call me," Dr. Colville suggested; "and, being shy, may have preferred to wait outside until I come out. They often do. But now it is breakfast-time, and I am in haste. Let me wheel you to the table."

Charlie cast longing looks at the window, as his chair was moved away from it.

"Not there, papa," he cried, petulantly, when Dr. Colville was setting him with his back to the light. "Don't you know that I like to face the window, that I may look out?" And the indulgent father, with only a smile at the boy's pettishness, wheeled him to the other side.

Dr. Colville's house and grounds were large and pleasant, but had no pretensions about them. A little grass field lay between the house and the high road; and straight

through it, without a turn, was the short avenue, so straight and broad that any one at the gate could look directly up to the windows, and be easily seen from them. Poor Charlie Colville, a cripple from his birth, was unable to walk, go to school, or play like other boys, and was, therefore, glad to find amusement and interest for himself in things which other boys would have cared little about. One of his favorite diversions was to sit at the window, and watch every one that passed along the road, to recognize those he knew, and to guess about the strangers. Even while eating his breakfast, he kept constantly looking out of the window; and so soon as it was over, he called on his mother to wheel him back to his old place.

Dr. Colville went into his own study after breakfast; and when he looked into the breakfast-room, before going out, he found Charlie again very impatient for him.

"The boy has come back, papa," he cried. "Only it is so provoking, he has sat down on one of the high stones outside the gate, and you can see no more of him than a naked foot."

"Which can tell me little," Dr. Colville said, smiling.

"But are you going out now, papa?"

"This very minute."

"And on foot?"

"Yes; I am going to pay visits in the village, and my gig is to follow me in a little."

"Oh, then," Charlie cried, well pleased, "I can watch and see if the boy speaks to you. And if he does, I can amuse myself making out stories about what he wants, and all that, until you come back to tell me."

But Charlie was again disappointed. Dr. Colville's step upon the gravel-walk made the little watcher look in through the gate; and when he saw the gentleman coming

down, he jumped off his stone, and stood modestly back to let him pass. Dr. Colville's mind was very busy with a dangerous case of sickness at that moment. He had forgotten all about Charlie's boy before he reached the gate, and passed on without seeing him. The boy allowed the doctor to pass, and then followed him. Presently Dr. Colville heard a voice say,—

"Please, sir, you don't happen to want a little boy, to help work in the garden, do you?"

The voice was very pleasant and cheery. Dr. Colville turned quickly round, and saw a boy about twelve years old, very poorly, but cleanly dressed, with a small, sharp face, and a pair of clear, smiling eyes, which the doctor greatly liked. He made a sign to the boy to walk alongside of him, and spoke to him as they went on.

"And what if I do? Do you think that you'd suit me?" he asked.

"Please, sir, I'd try. I'd engage to do every thing I was bid, and to work as hard as I could," was the prompt answer.

Dr. Colville looked, with a smile, at the small, spare figure of the boy. It did not promise any great amount of hard work.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Willie Mason, please, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"At the cottage behind the inn, sir."

"Mason! I don't remember the name. Have you lived there long?"

"No, sir, please. We lived a long way from here,—away down south. We only came here this spring."

"How many make the 'we'? Have you a father and mother?"

"Yes, sir, please; and two sisters, and three little brothers."

"Six of you! That is pretty well, I must say. And what brought you from down south?"

"Please, sir, father was a gardener,—not a gentleman's gardener, but went out by the day, and did very well. But he took a sore illness, after getting cold one night, when he had helped to put out a fire. And he had got sore burned and bruised, too; and all things together made him very ill. And he was long ill, so that all our money in the bank was gone; and when he got better, the strength had gone out of his legs, and he couldn't walk, nor even stand."

"And can't he walk yet?" Dr. Colville asked.

"No, sir, not a bit; and the fire had done something to his eyes, so that he can't see."

"But what brought you here, after all?" Dr. Colville asked again, looking keenly at the boy, as if to find out whether he were speaking the truth or not. "Should not you have been better off beside the people who had known you all your life?"

"Please, sir, mother had a brother here;

and, from what he said, we thought there would, maybe, be more work to be got here for the likes of sister Kate and me. Down there it seems to be all man's work, somehow."

Again Dr. Colville looked at the boy's slight figure, and felt sorry to think that the work of such a mere child should be of so much importance.

"Is your sister older than you?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir; I'm the eldest of them all," with a little pride in his importance. "So you see father and mother look to me to do what I can."

"Poor things!" the doctor said, half aloud. "What is the name of your mother's brother?"

"Simon Gentle, please, sir."

"But he's off to Australia this spring."

"Yes, sir. But we didn't know it till we came. A letter went to our old place to tell

us. But we didn't get it till after we came here."

"And have you found that there is any work for the 'likes' of you here?"

"Oh, yes, sir, thank God!" he answered, cheerfully. "Farmer Stone, up on the hill there, kept me a good long while to drive away the birds from the newly-sown seed, and such things. And the carpenter, down the town, had me for a week or two when his boy was ill; and I get many errands to run for the people at the inn."

"You have been hanging about my place all the morning, I think. What made you think that I was likely to give you work?"

"Please, sir, I didn't venture to think that. But your gardener, Mr. Ferne, comes to father for baskets; and father and me thought that it would be the grandest thing in the world if I could get to work under him."

Dr. Colville smiled.

"Your father might think, rightly enough, that Ferne could make you a good gardener," he said; "but I doubt, my man, if you would like him for a master."

"Please, sir, I know that he is pretty cross at times," Willie said, gravely; "but then, he's a real honest man. Father says I'd be safe to learn no harm from him."

"How does your father know that he is very honest?" Dr. Colville asked.

"Why, sir, you see, he came to father for baskets; and says he, 'I don't want to pay you less than is right, only don't charge me too much, for I have to pay for them myself.'"

"Pay for them himself!" repeated Dr. Colville; "nonsense, boy. What did he mean by that?"

"Please, sir, father asked him; and he said, 'Master would pay for them fast enough, I know, if I asked him. But,' says he, 'master gives me good wages, and has a

right to look that I should make my own baskets, as another gardener would do, and as I'd be glad to do. Only,' says he, 'I'm stiff, now, and can't get through my work fast enough, so I haven't time, and must get them done for me.' So, when he went away, father said to me, 'That's a downright faithful servant, that is. I'd like much if you could get to work for him.'"

Dr. Colville was pleased with this little anecdote of his old servant, and pleased, too, with the admiration it had excited. He asked him if this was the only reason why he wished to get work under Mr. Ferne.

"Not the only one; there was another," the boy said, looking down and coloring.

Dr. Colville pressed him for it.

"Please, sir, when I was up in Farmer Stone's fields," Willie said, at last, "I used to look right down into your shrubberies, and thought it all very grand and pretty. And I used to see Master Charles, please,

sir, and heard that he was lame, like poor father. And I thought that I'd like to be about, and able to do little things for him. And I thought that maybe I could do many a thing for him better than another, because of knowing how to do such things for father."

He had touched the tender point in Dr. Colville's heart. Pity for his boy, and desire to serve him, were sure to win the father's favor.

"Well, well, my boy," he said, "we'll see about it. I am going into this house, just now. But I'll try to call and see your father in the course of the day, and we'll see, then, what can be done."

CHAPTER II.

WILLIE BECOMES GARDENER.

Before going to Mason's cottage, he inquired about them from several of the town's-people, and heard from every one, that, at least, they were Simon Gentle's relations, and had come without knowing of his departure, as the boy had said, and that they appeared to be quiet, decent people. The landlord of the inn gave Willie a high character. He had, at different times, sent him on a good many errands, and had a good deal to do with him one way or other, and had always found him as civil, obliging, well-behaved a boy as one could find anywhere.

The appearance of the cottage and its inhabitants told the same tale to Dr. Colville's

experienced eyes. Every thing was beautifully clean and neat. A little maiden, not more than five or six years old, sat on the door-step knitting a stocking, and, with quite a motherly air, looking after two younger boys playing before the door. The mother came in after Dr. Colville, her baby in one arm, a heavy can of water in the other hand, and looking as tidy and scrupulously clean as if master baby had been number one, instead of number six. The father sat, propped up in a chair, making baskets. He was a handsome man, tall and strongly built. His face was very good and intellectual; and his dark, gray eyes, sightless as they were, showed how singularly fine they must have been when they could express the thoughts and feelings of the inner man.

"This is Dr. Colville, Richard," said Mrs. Mason, in answer to the inquiring turn of the blind man's head. "He has come, you know, to speak about our Willie."

"And perhaps to be of some use to you, too," Dr. Colville said, kindly, taking the seat the wife placed for him. He asked particularly about his past illness and present state, and said that although he could not promise to restore to him the sight of his eyes, or the strength of his limbs, he believed he could give him what might relieve the pain which he often suffered, and which caused him restless nights.

"And that would be a great blessing, sir; I would be most thankful for it, if the Lord saw fit to grant it to me," Richard said, cheerfully.

Dr. Colville was not a religious man. Such expressions as Richard had used he generally set down as cant, or hypocrisy, or at least as a mere fashion of speech which meant nothing. He was in haste to turn the conversation, and asked if Willie were at home.

"No, sir," said the mother, apologetically;

"I thought that maybe he ought to stay at home to see you. But it's market-day, and he usually earns a few pence in the market this day, holding horses, or running messages, or such like. And, poor fellow, he is so set upon helping us, that we could not keep him at home."

"Right, quite right," Dr. Colville said. "Let him always do what he can. I have thought of his wish to be a helper to Ferne my gardener. I believe that the old man ought to have some one of the kind, and I am willing to engage Willie for a month upon trial. I'll give him five shillings a week. But as you live so near, he must come home to his meals, for I can not have Mrs. Colville annoyed with a boy coming about the house, and perhaps disagreeing with the servants."

"I'm sure, sir, we are very much obliged," both parents said in a breath. "It's more than a little boy like him could expect," the

father added. "I'm quite sure he will do what he can to please; but I'm not sure that he'll be able to content such a real good gardener as Mr. Ferne seems to be. He'll have plenty of good-will to work; but he has not much knowledge or skill."

"Oh, well," said Dr. Colville, as he rose to go, "Ferne may be cross, but I believe he has too much sense to expect to find a skillful gardener in a boy twelve years old. If Willie be steady, obedient, and civil, I've little doubt they'll get on capitally."

As Dr. Colville went home that afternoon, he saw Charlie looking out for him, and he was glad to be able to satisfy his curiosity. He told him all about Willie, and expected that his interest in the boy would be increased by hearing how Willie had pitied him, and desired to help him. But it was not so. Charlie flushed with anger, and petulantly expressed a wish that the impertinent little monkey had kept his pity to

himself. He did not want either his pity or his service, he said, and he wished that his father had not engaged him.

The next day, however, when he heard that Willie was come, his curiosity returned. And as soon as his light forenoon lessons were over, he desired to be wheeled in his chair into the garden. He found Willie alone, hard at work upon a patch of ground, where there had been early spinach, and which had to be dug up, to be ready for an autumn crop. Ferne had set the boy this rather stiff job, in order to see, as he said, if he was shy of work. But Willie soon satisfied his new master upon that score. He set to his task manfully, and, resolving to make thorough good work of it, turned up the earth as well as many a man could have done.

CHARLIE AND WILLIE.

CHAPTER III.

WILLIE AND CHARLIE.

CHARLIE sat beside him for a little, watching in silence his sturdy pressing down and heaving up of the spade. He had at first been afraid of meeting curious, pitying looks from the boy, and the flush of a false shame had risen to his cheeks once and again from the expectation; but after the first ready and respectful removal of his jacket, which lay in the way of Charlie's chair, Willie had worked on without looking at him. He had a native delicacy of feeling, which kept him from staring, or in any other way showing his sense of poor Charlie's infirmity. He felt that if he were in any way different from other people, he should not like to be much looked at, and he was careful to obey God's

commandment, and to do as he would that others should do to him. He was a Christian boy, and Christian boys are most generally polite and gentle. They must be, indeed, so far as they have regard to that law of God which cares for the happiness and comfort of the least of God's creatures. But to return to our two boys.

Charlie felt shy about beginning to converse with Willie, although he had sent away the man-servant for that very purpose. He might have been able to begin in a free and easy way, had Willie been sitting by his side; but it seemed too formidable to break the silence in the loud voice which would have been required to get above the incessant click of Willie's spade. Before he had got courage for the effort, Ferne came up to look after his little servant.

"Well," he said growlingly, but not unkindly, "I dare say thou'lt do tolerable by and by. Thou mayst stop now a bit, and go home to dinner."

"Please, sir, I brought my dinner with me," said Willie. "Mother said it would take many minutes for me to step back and forward two or three times a day, and that, as I would not be worth my wages till I got a bit stronger and more in the way, it would be a sin to waste the master's time."

This was a kind of reasoning to please Ferne. He smiled gravely.

"Well, well, lad," he said, "sit down and eat thy dinner, and don't begin thy work again till I tell thee. Thee'd soon wear thyself out, working all day without resting a bit, and that would be no way to save the master's time."

Willie thanked him, and began carefully to scrape his shoes upon the spade before stepping on the gravel-walk.

Ferne turned back again.

"And mind, lad, to put on thy jacket, and to sit out of the wind. Thee is pretty warm like."

"Here's a fine sheltered corner by me," cried Charlie, eagerly; "sit down here, Willie, not a breath of wind comes in."

Willie turned with his grateful smile, and his "Thank you kindly, sir," from the one adviser to the other, and came over to where his jacket lay.

"What are you looking for? What do you want?" Charlie asked, as he saw Willie stretch his neck to look over the bushes.

"Please, sir, I saw a pump somewhere as I came along; I must wash my face and hands. Mother says that it's neither decent nor Christian-like to sit down to meat all in a mess like, and dirty as I am."

"Oh, there's the pump, right over by that walnut-tree," said Charlie. "But how will you do for a towel?"

"I've the one my dinner is tied up in," Willie said, untying his parcel.

Charlie watched him curiously. The dinner consisted of a thick piece of dry bread,

and a very thin morsel of cheese. There was an empty tin cup which he took with him to the pump, and brought back full of water. He sat down in the corner Charlie had pointed out, between the little carriage and some shrubs. With his bread and cheese on his knees, his cup of water by his side, he closed his eyes, clasped his hands, and Charlie saw that he was asking a blessing upon his food.

"Is that all you have for dinner?" he asked, looking compassionately upon the very dry, hard bread, and the tiny bit of cheese.

"And very good it is, sir, I can tell you," Willie said, eating with great satisfaction.

"Do you never get any thing better?"

"Not very often now. At home, when father was able to work, and we had plenty, we used to have nice warm potatoes and milk, and often a drop of broth, or a bit of bacon, to put strength into the potatoes, as mother used to say."

"But you don't get that now?"

"Well, not often the milk, or broth, or bacon," Willie admitted, adding, — but more as if thinking aloud, than as if speaking to Charlie, — "but I sometimes think the dry bread is sweeter than ever the potatoes and broth were. We always looked for dinner then, and didn't always remember that it came from God. But now that we have been sore pinched, and have had to ask God for every morsel we get, it seems somehow to come more straight from his hand, and to be sweeter than I can say."

Of course Charlie understood the words Willie used, but of the feeling they expressed he knew but little. He had never known what it was to feel that one of his comforts or pleasures, great or small, came to him straight from the hand of God. He took no notice of what Willie had said, but began to ask him how they lived, and what they did in his home. Willie was glad to tell his little

story to an interested listener. He told how the father had been taken ill; how in the very worst of his illness baby had been born, and the father and mother lay sick in one room with no one to see to them, as Willie said, except himself and little Kate; how there was no money coming in, and a great deal going out for medicine and such things; how there was often little to eat, and the kind brother and sister gave the greater part of their meals to the little ones, and sat with their backs to their parents, and took a long while to eat the little bit that came to them, so that their being stinted might not be suspected.

Willie did not tell this as if he thought it meritorious, but very simply, as recalling the satisfaction they had felt in being able to keep the little ones from hunger, and the hearts of the parents as far as possible from anxiety.

"And was it better when your mother got about again?" Charlie asked.

Willie shook his head. "It got worse," he said. "At first they only lived sparingly, to save money for what might be before them. But soon there was no money to save. From day to day," he said, "they did not know where food was to come from; and often the older and stronger had to go hungry for the sake of the sick father and the very young children."

"Is it very bad to feel hungry?" Charlie asked.

Willie smiled a little, and shook his head again.

"Bad enough," he said. "One feels so weak and weary, and there is such a dragging, breaking through kind of feeling, as if one had not strength to keep up, or to keep together, — as if one was going to fall to bits somehow."

"I know what it is to feel very weak," Charlie said, "and it is very bad, — worse than pain, I think. How could you bear to

go on that way, going about seeking work with that weak feeling, and never seeing how things were to be better?"

"The worst was to see the others so bad," Willie said, "and the poor little bodies crying for food. It was very sore to stand. I don't know how we could have stood it, and the sorrow of seeing father so ill, so very ill. Father says we never could have stood it, had it not been that we were all together at home, and that the Lord was always beside us."

"I don't know how that could help you to bear hunger," Charlie said, bluntly. "If God had sent you plenty of food, I could understand how that helped you, but not when you were left hungry."

"That must be because I don't say it right," Willie said, earnestly. "I mean that it was a great comfort and help to know that the great God in heaven, our good and loving Father, was ever about our bed, and

around our path, knew, as he says, our down-sitting and our up-rising, and every thought of our hearts. Don't you see what a comfort it was to feel that every minute, never to be out of his sight for a moment, so full of love and goodness as he is? Don't you see that?"

Charlie did not see, did not understand. But before he could say so, Ferne came up to tell Willie that the dinner-hour was over. Charlie was not pleased.

"But I want him to wheel me into the shrubbery," he said; "I have not seen my celestial rose-tree to-day. I want him to take me there."

Ferne growled and grumbled, but said that, of course, Master Charles always took his own way; and the boys set off together, Willie wheeling the chair with great care and gentleness. They did not, however, talk much more, for, after Willie had taken Charlie where he had been told, he asked

leave to go back to his work. He would have liked to stay in the beautiful shrubbery; and it was pleasant to wheel about the poor lame boy. But he knew that Mr. Ferne expected him back, and that he had been hired to help him, and not to wheel Charlie; and, in spite of his petted young master's remonstrances, he was firm, though very respectful, in his determination to go to the house for an attendant to Charlie, and to return to his own hard work. Charlie, accustomed as he was to rule, was obliged to give way to his new friend, and he did not see him again that day.

CHAPTER IV.

WHY WILLIE WAS HAPPY.

WHAT had passed between them, however, remained in Charlie's mind. He thought a great deal about the hardships Willie had described, and he could not forget what the boy had said about his comfort under them. This happened to be one of Charlie's restless, sleepless nights. When alone in bed, Willie's words came back to him. He repeated them, half unconsciously, —"About my bed, and around my path, knowing my down-sitting and up-rising, and every thought of my heart;" and a strange feeling of awe came over him as he realized the truth they contained. Was God now about his bed? Did God, even at that moment, know every thought of his heart?

Charlie felt that he had many thoughts which he wished to keep for ever from God's sight, which he greatly dreaded the great and holy God knowing any thing about. And if he could not hide them, — if he could never, for a moment, get out of God's sight, — if the Lord was about and around him continually, whatever he did, or thought, or felt! It was too much, too fearful to think of; and he tossed about on his bed, miserable, fearful, unable to bear the thought, and yet quite as unable to put it away.

As was always the case after a restless night, Charlie was weak and feverish next day, and unable for any exertion. The teacher, who came to him for an hour or two every day, was dismissed; and Charlie, at his own request, was wheeled out into a little summer-house, which had been built expressly for his pleasure. It was a pretty, pleasant room, with windows on every side, most of which commanded a fine view. All

the windows and the door had been open through the whole morning, so that it felt very cool and fresh for the fevered child, when he was wheeled into it. He grew more comfortable here, and soon fell asleep. His mother sat beside him with her work. After some time, the sun went behind a cloud, and Mrs. Colville, fancying that there was a little chill in the air, went to the house for a shawl to throw over him. She was detained a little; and, while she was away, Charlie awoke. The first sound he heard, when he awoke, was a talking under one of the windows. It came from Willie Mason and his sister, Kate, who were sitting under the shade and shelter of the summer-house, while Willie ate his dinner.

Kate had got a place, as she proudly said. That is to say, she had been hired to act as a little drudge to the wife of one of the shop-keepers in the town. She was to get no wages the first half-year, except a bonnet

and a pair of shoes, that she might look decent when she went out with Mrs. Reed's children. Mrs. Reed was a selfish woman, who exacted far too much work from the child, and gave her little praise or thanks for all she did so well and cheerfully. Little Kate had got a most unexpected holiday. A sister-in-law, above herself in the world, was coming to spend the day with Mrs. Reed. And, unwilling that the grand lady should know that she had no better servant than the poor little Kate, Mrs. Reed had sent her home for the day, and hired another woman to take her place. After a long gossip about family news with her father and mother, nursing the baby, and petting the little ones to her heart's content, to carry Willie's dinner to him seemed the pleasantest thing possible to Kate.

No dry bread to-day, Willie! But a bowlful of potatoes, as smoking hot as Kate could bring them, running all the way, as

she had done. Willie had been well content with the dry bread, but he enjoyed the nice potatoes very much, although his enjoyment was a little checked by the account his questions drew from Kate of all she had to bear with in her situation. They were talking of this when Charlie awoke.

"It is very hard, and that it is," Willie said, indignantly. "It must be very hard never to know when you are doing right or wrong, when she will be pleased or not."

"So it is," Kate acknowledged. "Do you know, Willie, I was so put out when she scolded me last night, after all the pains I had taken, that I could not help crying a long, long time after I went to bed; but then, O Willie," with a sudden change of tone, "there came to me, so fresh and bright, that text which father says he always goes to sleep upon, you know, Willie."

"Ay," Willie answered; "'His left hand

is under my head, his right hand doth embrace me!' It's grand, Kate."

"Oh, it's beautiful!" she cried, vehemently; "you can't think how happy it made me, all in a minute, to know that the blessed Lord Jesus had taken me in his arms,—'The everlasting arms underneath thee,' you know, Willie."

"And to think that he goes with us through all the day, through all our way," Willie responded. "Not a bit here, and bit there; but all the way, every step o it."

Mrs. Colville here came back to the summer-house.

"Charlie," she said, when she saw he was awake, "the Smiths have called. I must leave you for a little. Shall I send Jane to sit beside you?"

"No," he answered, promptly. "Send in little Willie Mason. You'll find him under the windows. And tell that old growler,

Ferne, that you have sent him, and that he is not to take him away."

Mrs. Colville did as he desired; and, in another minute, Willie stood in the summer-house. The children's talk had brought back to Charlie all he had been thinking and feeling through the night; and, even while his mother was speaking, he suddenly resolved to get Willie in, and ask him why the same thought should make them feel so differently. But now that Willie was beside him, he felt shy, and did not know how to begin; while Willie, too, felt very awkward, in there beside the young gentleman, and with nothing to do. A minute or two passed in shy, uncomfortable silence, and then Charlie said,—

"Your poor little sister does not seem to have a good place. I heard you talking just now."

"No, poor little dear," Willie said, pityingly; "but father says we must learn to take the rough of life with the smooth."

"Rough enough life is to him, I think," Charlie said again. "It must be terrible dull work to sit still all day, and in the dark, too."

"You'd not say so, if you knew father," Willie cried eagerly. "He is always so bright and hearty. When we come in and find him alone, he is always singing psalms to himself. And in the morning, after his bad nights, when I ask him how he is, he says, 'Brave and hearty, lad, as a king.' He had a terrible night of pain, two or three nights ago, and in the morning he told us it had been the shortest night of the year to him; that the Lord had been telling him so much of himself, and that he had had so much to say to the Lord in turn."

"Oh," cried Charlie, breaking though his shyness with a mighty effort, "that is what I want to ask you, Willie. I thought a great deal about what you said about the Lord's being around our bed, and about our path;

but it is no comfort to me to know that. It's a pain and a sorrow and a dread to me. God bids us do so many things I can not bear to do, and forbids us to do so many things I like best to do, that I never want to know that he is near me. I'd like to know that God was far away, and knew nothing about me. And that is the truth; and there it is for you." He spoke with great vehemence; and when Willie looked sadly at him, he cried, almost fiercely, "Speak; tell me, won't you, why I feel so."

"I think," Willie said, gently, "it must be because you do not know God."

"What do you know about God?" Charlie asked.

"I know," Willie said, slowly and reverently, "that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' That 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were

yet sinners, Christ died for us.' I know — oh, don't I know? — that he is full of loving-kindness and tender mercy;" he clasped his hands as he spoke, and the tears came into his eyes.

Charlie was silent for a little. He did feel that if he could once know such a God of love, he, too, might like to live in his presence, to walk in his way.

"How does one come to know God so well?" he asked, more gently, almost humbly.

"By what he tells us in his Word about himself."

"What part of the Word?"

"Oh, the whole," Willie said, earnestly. "In some parts the Lord tells us about himself, and what he is, in words. In other parts there are histories of what he has done, to tell us a great deal about what God is. And in the Gospels there are stories of all the goodness of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ,

when he went about doing good. And you know he was God manifest in the flesh, and in him we see how gloriously good God is."

"Was it by reading these things that you came to know God?" Charlie asked.

"Yes; and by what the Lord himself told me in my heart. Oh, often and often the Holy Spirit comes into my heart and tells me all those things, in such a new way that they are greater and better than ever I knew before, and fill me with such a joy as I can hardly bear."

Charlie looked wistfully on the little boy's glowing face. He longed, very much, to get that knowledge, that joy. Mrs. Colville came back, and Willie went to his work.

CHAPTER V.

HOW CHARLIE LEARNED TO LOVE GOD.

THE next day, Saturday, was wet. Charlie did not go out, and did not see Willie. On the Sabbath, when he was left alone, he thought a great deal of all he had heard. For the first time in his life he read the Bible with great eagerness, more particularly the Gospels. His heart was touched at the story of all Christ's goodness and love; and he tried to work himself up to love him in return, — tried hard to make himself rejoice in God's presence, as Willie did. Sometimes he fancied that he had succeeded. Sometimes he felt tears of tenderness rise to his eyes, and was glad to feel them. But in the next minute all the glow was gone, and his heart felt as dead and cold about God as ever.

This made him very unhappy. He wished to love God, and he could not; and he felt as if angry even with God, because he could not love him. So the Sabbath passed away.

On the Monday, he was impatient to see Willie. His shyness and pride were now broken down by unhappiness. He felt so unhappy, — such a restless craving to know God, and rejoice in him as Willie did, that he thought of little else; and as soon as he could, he desired to be taken to the summer-house, and that Willie should be sent to him. Willie came. Charlie received him warmly, and began at once upon the subject most in his thoughts.

"Oh, Willie," he cried, despairingly, "knowing about God does not help me. I have read all about his goodness and love, and I can't love him, or be glad to have him near me."

"Father says," Willie replied, thoughtfully, "that it is not enough to know *about*

God. That we must know himself, as our precious, loving Friend and Father."

"Oh, it's all the same," Charlie cried, impatiently; "about or not. It's only a word."

"No," Willie said, decidedly; "it is more than a word. Father says that we may know about a good and great man far away from us, whom we can never see; and we may know about his goodness and greatness so as to love him for it in a way; but that is quite a different love from what we feel for the dear friend who is ever beside us, and whose goodness we know, because it is given to ourselves, into our very hearts. We can be content to be always far away from the one, and never see him; but, oh, it breaks our hearts when the other goes away for a day or an hour."

Charlie cast down his eyes, and lay for some minutes in deep thought. Willie stood beside him, and watched him. He saw tears

rise in his eyes, and run slowly down his cheeks, and Charlie made no effort to hide them. At last he said, in a low, sad voice,—

"Willie, I feel as if I could never love God in that way,—as if he could never be my friend in that way. There is nothing in me that he should love. And if he is not, I can never be glad in him as you are. It must always be a terrible fear to me to know that he is near me, and never a joy as it is to you."

"To be sure," Willie cried, eagerly, "there isn't the least bit of any thing in me to make God my friend. There is every thing to make him my enemy. I am a sinner, and God is the enemy of sinners. But don't you know, Master Charles,—don't you know," his voice trembling, and a sob of deep feeling interrupting him,—"don't you know that when we were enemies God reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son? Don't you know that the Lord Jesus Christ,

even God himself, as he was, loved us while we were dead in trespasses and sins, and died for us, that he might reconcile us to God? It is for his sake, and because God looks upon us now as a part of Christ, that he loves us so tenderly, and that we can love him."

Still Charlie looked dissatisfied and sad.

"I don't know," he said, wearily. "I suppose it is as you say. I know they always say that we are only saved through Christ; only, Willie, I am sure that there is something more, something better in you than there is in me, — something to make Christ care for you and wish to save you."

"Not a bit, not a bit," Willie broke in eagerly. "You don't know me" ——

Charlie interrupted him.

"And you don't know me," he said, passionately. "You don't know how I have never thought of, or cared for God all my life, how I have done all kinds of things I

knew he had forbidden. Twenty times a day I have done them, and never, never even tried to do the things he bid me do. And how, oh, Willie, even now, I don't wish to have any thing to do with God. I can't bear to think that he is near me; and if I could, I'd take myself away from him as far as ever I could, and never wish to see or know him. Indeed, indeed, I know I am far worse than you."

"Well, well," Willie said, quickly, "let it be so. Let you be worse than me,—a worse sinner than any one. Don't you know that it was for sinners Christ died? Don't you know it was his enemies he came to save? If you've nothing else to say for yourself why Christ should save you, at least you can say you are a sinner, and that Christ came to save sinners."

"Yes, indeed, I can say that," Charlie said, his face brightening a little; "for, oh, Willie, I am a great sinner!"

Had Willie known more of the working of God's Spirit in the heart, he might have told Charlie that this knowledge of his sinfulness was from God, and was a sign that the Holy Ghost was at work in him. But he did not understand that quite clearly, and only said earnestly, "Keep that, Master Charles, keep that. You are a sinner, and Christ came to save sinners."

And Charlie said again, "To be sure, I can say that any way."

"There is mamma," he added. "I want to say many things more, Willie; but I'll be here again to-morrow, and will send for you then."

But Charlie was not out on the morrow, nor on many morrows. He had a return of pain and fever, and was for about ten days confined to bed. Perhaps the anxiety of his mind increased the illness of his body. He could get no peace, no rest. Now and then, for a little time, his heart would trust in

what Willie had told him, that Christ came to save sinners, — to save his enemies; but the peace and trust always passed away again, and he grew as anxious and restless as ever. He wanted to feel some good thing in himself, however small it might be. He set hard to work to make himself love God, to make himself delight in him; and when he found that he could not, that still the old feeling of dislike and dread was too strong for him, he got into despair, and was very anxious and wretched. As the anxiety and misery increased day by day in his heart, the fever burned in his veins, and he grew so weak and thin that his father and mother became alarmed.

In the mean time, Willie was going on hard at work, and growing in favor with Mr. Ferne, and with his master and mistress. Dr. Colville had taken a great liking to all the family. He had asked his wife to visit them, and she, too, was much attracted by

their cheerful contentment, their constant industry, and the order and cleanliness of every thing about them. She changed the arrangement that Dr. Colville had made, that Willie should have his meals from home, and desired him to come in every day to dine with the servants, when he got good meat and broth, to give him back, poor fellow, the strength and substance he had lost during the time of sore pinching want through which they had all passed. So that while Charlie was getting weaker and paler every day, Willie was getting strong and rosy, and was, as he said, twice the boy he had been.

After Charlie had been in the house about a fortnight, one day, when he felt a little better, he expressed a strong desire to get into the fresh air. The day was very fine, and his father consented to let him try. He was so weak that he could not bear even the easy motion of his little carriage; but his

father carried him in his arms, and laid him on a couch on the lawn, under the drawing-room windows.

"Now," cried Charlie, impatiently, almost before he was laid down, "I want Willie Mason, and I want to have him all alone. I want every one to go away, except Willie Mason."

His mother wished to stay beside him, but her request that he would allow her to do so irritated and excited him so much that she was obliged to yield and leave him. Willie came. He was greatly shocked to see Charlie look so very pale, and so very unhappy. There was something touchingly piteous in the expression of his face, in the tone of his voice, as he slowly turned his eyes upon Willie, and said feebly, —

"Oh, Willie, I don't know what you will think of me. I know I think myself horribly bad. Even after all, — even though I know that Christ gave himself to die for sinners,

for his enemies, I can not love him, I can not. It is not in my heart to do it. It can not love him, and I can not make it."

"No, you can't. No, it can't. It isn't in your heart, in any of our hearts, to love him, cold, dead, and bad as they are," Willie cried. "But, oh, Master Charles, don't you know that God has promised to give us new hearts? He says, 'A new heart will I give you,'—'I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.'"

A light seemed to break in on poor Charlie's dark, anxious mind.

"A new heart!" he cried. "To be sure that is what I want. To take away the heart of stone! Oh, indeed, that is what I want. My heart is stone, so cold, so heavy, nothing moves it, nothing makes it feel. To be sure, to be sure, that is what I want." And, clasping his hands tightly together, he cried out with exceeding great desire,—

"O Lord, give me the new heart. Lord, thou hast promised. O Lord, do it for me."

And Willie, with the tears running down his cheeks, repeated the words, — "O Lord, do it; for Christ's sake give it."

Charlie's vehemence of feeling had quite exhausted him. He sunk back upon his pillow, faint and weary, and closed his eyes. Willie stood quite still, hoping that Charlie was going to sleep; but he looked up again at Willie, and smiled.

"Oh, Willie," he said, "I do think God is going to give me a new heart. At least, I know that he has made me put it over into his hands, and leave him to make me love him."

After he had said this, he closed his eyes again, and this time he really slept, — slept peacefully and quietly for more than half an hour. He awoke refreshed and comfortable, and found his faithful friend, Willie, still standing beside him. He smiled.

"Oh, Willie," he said, "I do think it is all coming right. I do think that God is going to give me the new heart. Already I seem to feel glad that he is near me. And I am not sorry or afraid that he should know all my thoughts, because he has to put them all right, and it is better he should know all their wrongness."

He had no time to say more. Mrs. Colville had been watching him anxiously from the window. She had seen that he was sleeping, had seen by Willie's bending over him that he was awake, and she came out to know how he was. He received her with a happy smile, and, almost for the first time in his life giving up his own wishes to hers, consented that she should sit beside him, while Willie went back to his work, praying earnestly in his heart that God would hear Charlie's prayer, and make him love himself. God had heard. God had answered. From that day, Charlie's trust in God and joy in him grew steadily and surely.

And as his heart got quietness and rest in God, his body grew stronger and stronger. From that day he began to learn to be contented and happy under every thing that God sent him. He learned to take patiently the troubles, the pain, the weariness, the helplessness, which God appointed for him, and to enjoy most heartily every pleasure with which God blessed him. By slow degrees, perhaps, but still steadily and surely, he got the better of his old spirit of discontent and fretfulness; and the improvement to his health which the removal of that spirit brought about was greater than his parents could understand. They rejoiced greatly in the new happiness of this their only son, their darling child. And in after years, when they came more fully to understand from whence it came, I think they were stirred up to seek such a happiness for themselves.

I need not tell how father, mother, and

son cared for the little garden-boy who was Charlie's dearest friend. How he came in time to take the place of Mr. Ferne, and was able to keep his dear father and mother in comfort, and to get a good education for the little ones. Or how little Kate was taken from her hard mistress, and put to the school, and taught to work, and finally became a faithful, attached servant to Mrs. Colville. All this happiness, and much more, which came to Willie Mason and his family, I am very sure my little friends can make out for themselves. And I have only to say, let them fancy Willie as happy as they please, they can not fancy him happier than he was, for his rejoicing was in the Lord his God, and the joy of the Lord was his strength.

KNOCKING ON THE WINDOW.

Harry Bosworth was a fine little boy about four years old. He had one great fault, which made him and his parents much trouble, and that was a quick and impatient temper.

One day he had been betrayed into some sad offense, and the only reproof his mother gave him was to exclaim, "Oh that naughty, *naughty* spirit, I fear, is going to stay in my dear little boy's heart for ever!" The words, and perhaps more than the words, the sad and tearful look of his mother as she uttered them, subdued him, and he shrunk away from her presence without uttering a word.

After a time, he returned with his bright

eyes dancing as though he bore good news, and, putting his arms affectionately around his mother's neck, whispered, "There, mamma, that naughty spirit has been sent out of my heart, and is never coming back any more!" and, unclasping his arms, he looked in her face as he added, "Say, 'ma, a'n't you glad? It won't come back again, certain!"

She couldn't resist the earnest little face which so besought her to rejoice and take courage, and she smiled as she answered, "I fear you will need stronger bolts than any you know of, my darling, to keep the door of your little heart always shut against it!"

"Oh, no, I sha'n't, 'ma; and don't you be afraid again; for I threw it out so hard, I killed it the first thing. *No 'deed*, it will never make me naughty any more. Won't you be glad, 'ma?"

"To be sure I will, my son; but let me

tell you that you must keep very close watch of it, for it is a spirit that very often comes to life after people think it is quite dead!"

Through that day and the next there was no evidence of the return of the dreaded spirit; but on the third morning, an angry tone from Harry to his little sister, as they played in the nursery, startled Mrs. Bosworth, and she turned to Harry, exclaiming, "Has the naughty spirit come in again?"

The little fellow looked confused, and hung his head for a moment, but quickly raised it again, saying, with a very encouraging smile,—

"Oh, no, 'ma; it only came and knocked on the window, and you heard it through the glass!"—and he at once became sunny and cheerful.

One afternoon, when Mrs. B. returned home from visiting, little Harry met her at the door, and looked wistfully in her face, as though he had some important and not par-

ticularly joyous thing, which he wished, yet dreaded, to tell.

"Has my little boy been good while I have been away?" asked his mother, as she folded her shawl.

"No, 'ma," he answered, slowly, "I have been real naughty,—and I am so sorry,—I pushed little sister over, when she sat on the floor, and bumped a blue spot on her forehead; and I've '*cluded* that naughty spirit didn't get killed so easy after all, and I don't know what to do with myself;" and he buried his face in his mother's dress, and burst into tears.

"I will tell you just what to do," said his mother, as she laid her hand caressingly upon his little curly head. "Ask your heavenly Father to take that naughty spirit away from you; and whenever you feel it coming back, trying to get in to your heart, either at the door or window, pray quickly that the Holy Spirit may be sent to help you guard against

it; and God will hear you, and give you those strong bolts I spoke of the other day, which only the Holy Spirit uses. It will be a hard battle for you, my son; but if you watch constantly, and ask God earnestly, as you sometimes ask me for what I can give you, you will not have to grieve over unfortunate actions which this troublesome spirit tempts you to commit."

And the little fellow obeyed the counsel, and rejoiced with a new joy in the hope of one day overcoming this besetting sin; and more than once he has had the pleasure of seeing his mother *really* glad in the departure of the naughty spirit, as it still comes from time to time, and knocks on the window!

THE END.

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